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SEGA
SONIC UNIVERSE™
SPARK OF LIFE
#2
OF 4
SONIC UNIVERSE | 72
Tracy Yardley!
-Jim Amash
Hunzeker

Welcome to Sonic's comic book adventures – a world beyond what you know from the SEGA games! Where, as strange new threats emerge, NICOLE – the advanced artificial being – is confronted by a figure from her past...

CHARACTER SELECT

SONIC UNIVERSE™

PRINCESS SALLY ACORN
FREEDOM FIGHTER LEADER

NICOLE THE HOLO-LYNX
ADVANCED A.I.

MILES "TAILS" PROWER
YOUNG GENIUS

DR. ELLIDY
RETIRED HERMIT

PREVIOUSLY...

FLOATING FRAGMENTS

Thanks to the sinister Dr. Eggman, Dark Gaia has begun to stir, leaving the planet cracked and broken! Continents have split apart, and dark creatures emerge at night. Now, the Freedom Fighters are on the hunt for the Chaos Emeralds and Gaia Temples needed to restore the world!

Responding to a desperate call for help, Sally, Tails, Nicole and Big arrived on Isolated Island, saving the mysterious Dr. Ellidy from a strange accident... but *was it* an accident?

Something dangerous may be lurking in the dark...

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SPARK OF LIFE PART TWO

I'VE NEVER REALLY GIVEN A TOUR BEFORE, BUT I FIGURED I'D LEAVE THE BEST FOR LAST. DEAR GUESTS, I GIVE YOU MY LATEST DISCOVERY...
I CALL IT A RED STAR RING!
FOR, Uh, FAIRLY OBVIOUS REASONS...

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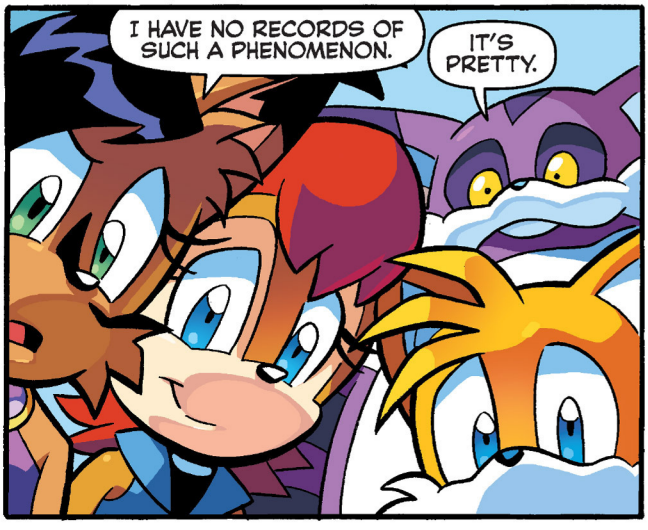
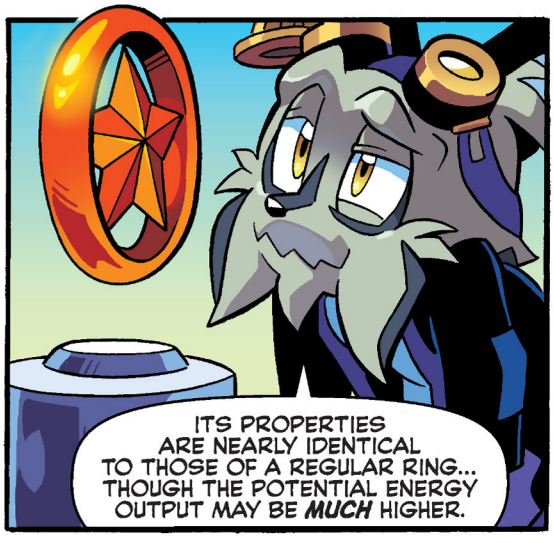
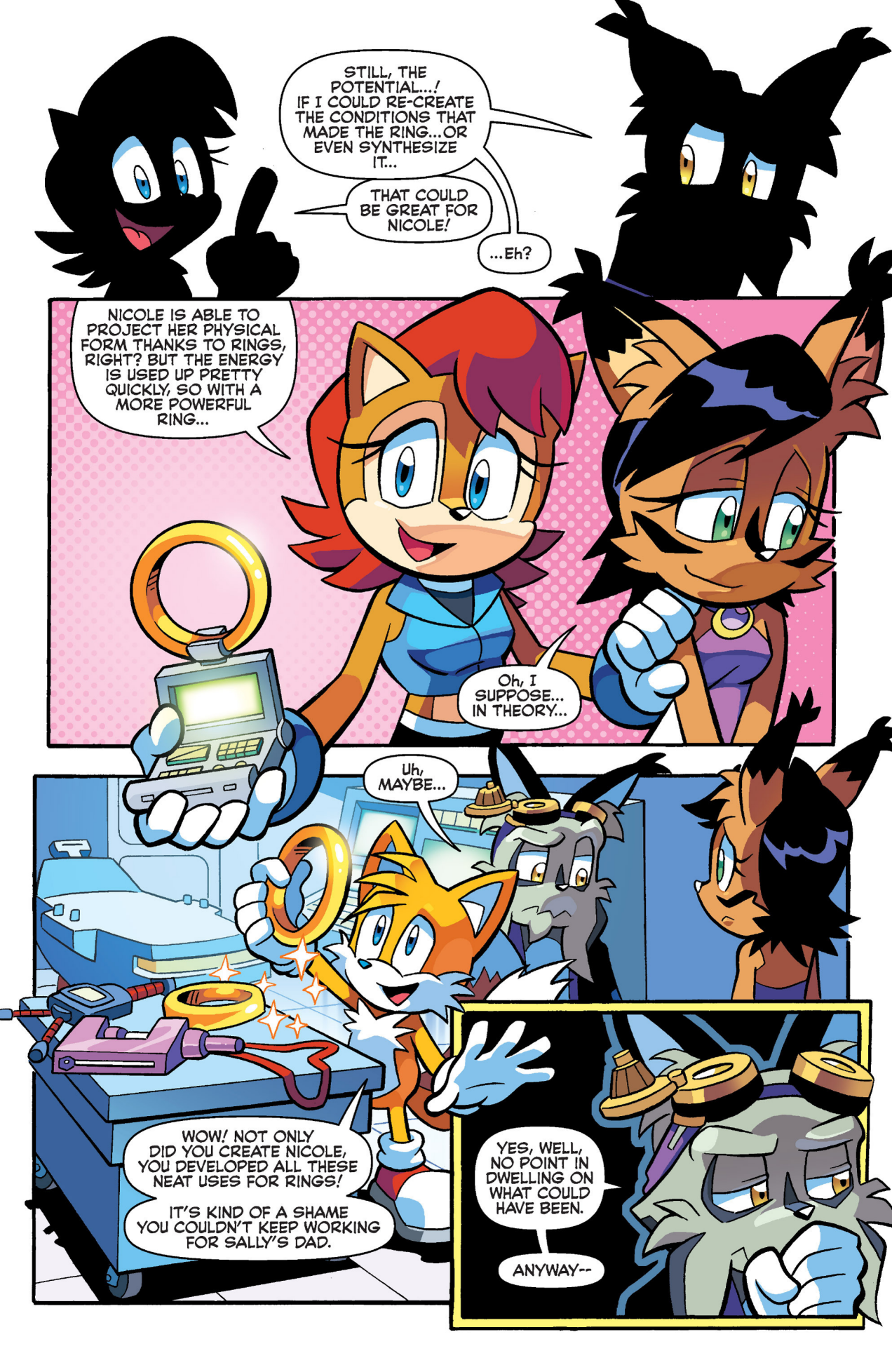




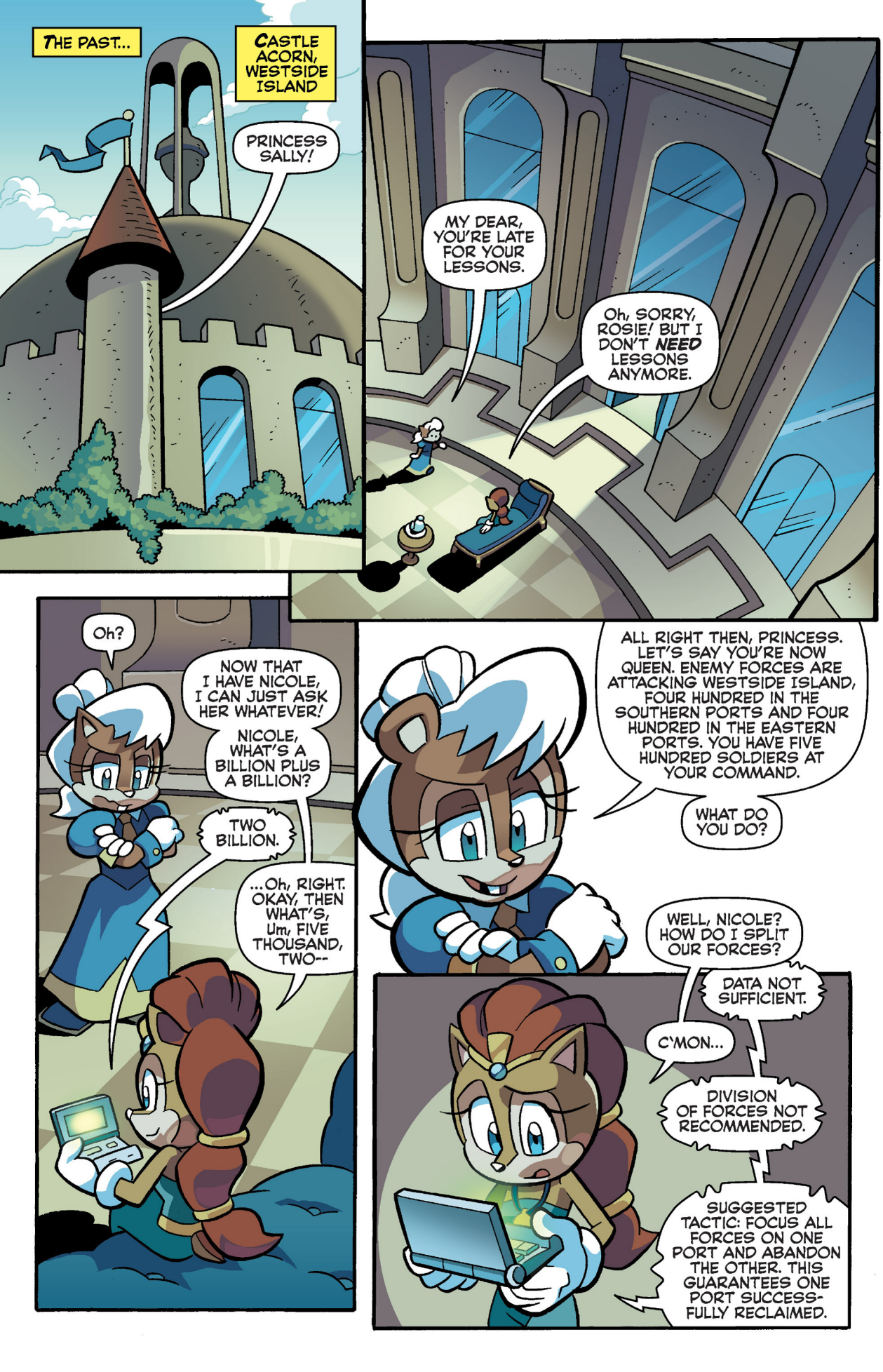
SO COOL...AND IT CAME FROM THE LAKE OF RINGS HERE ON THE ISLAND?
YEP. THE LAKE USUALLY PRODUCES A MAGIC RING ON A DAILY BASIS.
OVER A WEEK AGO, IT WENT DORMANT, AND I THOUGHT IT HAD DRIED UP, SO TO SPEAK.
I DON'T YET KNOW WHAT CHANGED, BUT AFTER A FEW DAYS OF NO ACTIVITY, IT--
Erm... LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?
THERE'S NO FOOD IN THIS FRIDGE.
THAT'S A SERVER ROOM, BIG. IT KEEPS THE COMPUTERS COLD.
Oh. I DIDN'T KNOW COMPUTERS COULD GO BAD.
Uh... AS I WAS SAYING...
I HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT WHY THIS RING FORMED. IT MIGHT HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE RECENT DARK GAIA ENERGY*, BUT I HAVEN'T EXAMINED ALL THE VARIABLES YET.
* THE ENERGY AND MISTS SEEPING OUT FROM WITHIN THE CRACKED PLANET--Editor


STILL, THE POTENTIAL...! IF I COULD RE-CREATE THE CONDITIONS THAT MADE THE RING...OR EVEN SYNTHESIZE IT...
THAT COULD BE GREAT FOR NICOLE!
...Eh?
NICOLE IS ABLE TO PROJECT HER PHYSICAL FORM THANKS TO RINGS, RIGHT? BUT THE ENERGY IS USED UP PRETTY QUICKLY, SO WITH A MORE POWERFUL RING...
Oh, I SUPPOSE... IN THEORY...
Uh, MAYBE...
WOW! NOT ONLY DID YOU CREATE NICOLE, YOU DEVELOPED ALL THESE NEAT USES FOR RINGS!
IT'S KIND OF A SHAME YOU COULDN'T KEEP WORKING FOR SALLY'S DAD.
YES, WELL, NO POINT IN DWELLING ON WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN.
ANYWAY--

SINCE THE RED STAR RING APPEARED, I'VE HAD MY LITTLE ROBOT BUDDIES--Erm... THE RE-PROGRAMMED BADNIKS--MONITORING THE LAKE OF RINGS. IT SEEMS TO HAVE GONE DORMANT AGAIN.
SO IT MIGHT BE MAKING ANOTHER RING!
RIGHT.
UNFORTUNATELY, YESTERDAY I LOST THE VIDEO FEED FROM THE LAKE.
MAYBE THE BADNIK STATIONED AT THE LAKE WAS DAMAGED OR DESTROYED BY THE DARK GAIA CREATURES.
THING IS, IT'S STILL SHOWING AS ACTIVE IN MY SYSTEMS. I TRIED TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK VIA THE DIGITIZER, AND, WELL... YOU KNOW HOW *THAT* WENT.*
OTHER FEEDS HAVE SINCE GONE OFFLINE, TOO.
*SEE LAST ISSUE
IT COULD BE A HARDWARE ISSUE. I'D BE HAPPY TO TAKE A LOOK AT IT!
ACTUALLY, DOCTOR, I WANTED TO DISCUSS THIS EARLIER...

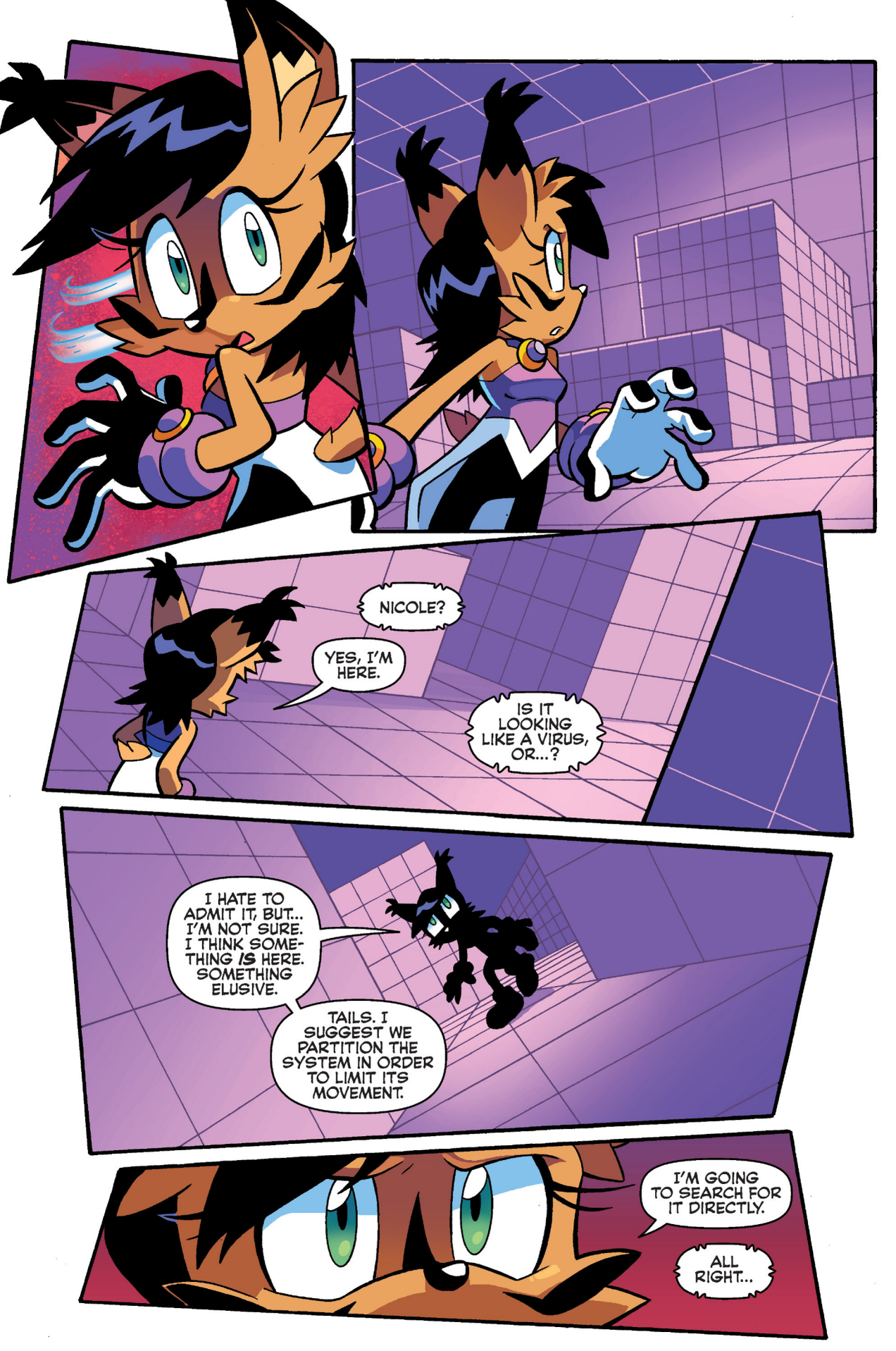
WHEN YOU DIGITIZED YOURSELF, YOU ENDED UP *TRAPPED* IN THE DIGITAL WORLD. FURTHERMORE, YOU CAME UNDER ATTACK. EVEN IF YOUR PHYSICAL BODY REMAINED HERE, *MENTALLY*, YOU WERE AT RISK.
I BELIEVE THIS WAS ALL A DELIBERATE ACT OF AGGRESSION.
SOME-THING IS TRYING TO TAKE OVER YOUR SYSTEMS.
SIGH
I'D LIKE TO ARGUE THAT MY SYSTEMS ARE IRONCLAD, BUT I SUPPOSE *YOU* WOULD KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE.
AND I GUESS IT FITS...
HEY, NO WORRIES! NICOLE AND I CAN HANDLE THIS!
AND BIG AND I WILL GO INVESTIGATE THE LAKE OF RINGS IN THE MEANTIME.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU HAVE A VEHICLE...?
Heh...I'M NOT *THAT* MUCH OF A RECLUSE.

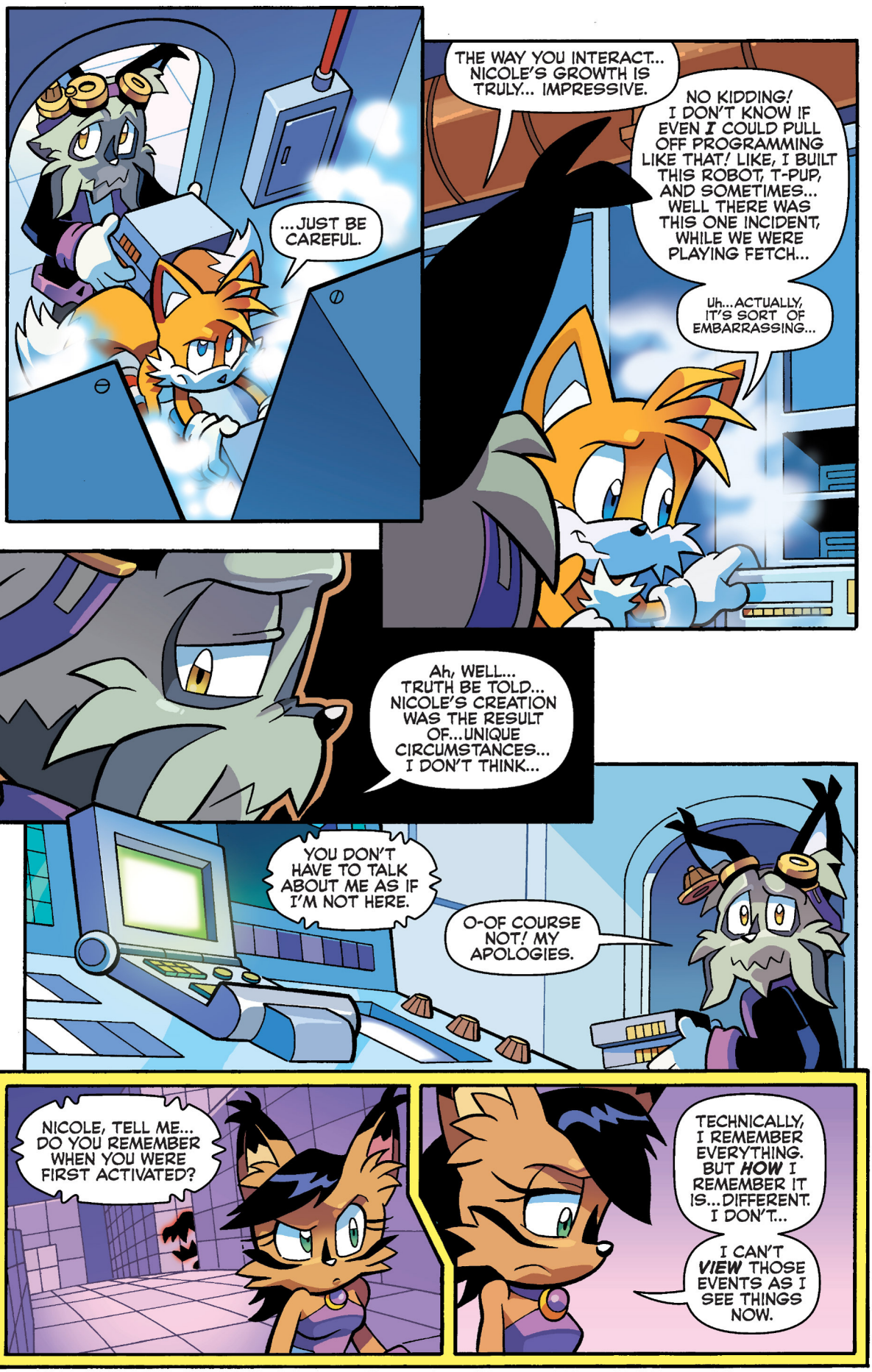
PRINCESS SALLY... STUFF KEEPS FLYING INTO MY MOUTH.
IS YOUR MOUTH OPEN?
YEP.
TRY CLOSING IT?
OKAY.
HEY, BIG? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF NICOLE?
NICOLE? I LIKE HER. SHE'S NICE.
YOU DON'T THINK IT'S WEIRD THAT SHE'S NOT ORGANIC, LIKE US?
Uh... NOPE?
AS LONG AS THEY'RE NICE, I DON'T CARE WHAT ANYONE IS.
I GUESS IT JUST TAKES SOME GETTING USED TO FOR SOME PEOPLE...


THE PAST...
CASTLE ACORN, WESTSIDE ISLAND
PRINCESS SALLY!
MY DEAR, YOU'RE LATE FOR YOUR LESSONS.
Oh, SORRY, ROSIE! BUT I DON'T NEED LESSONS ANYMORE.
Oh?
NOW THAT I HAVE NICOLE, I CAN JUST ASK HER WHATEVER!
NICOLE, WHAT'S A BILLION PLUS A BILLION?
TWO BILLION.
...Oh, RIGHT. OKAY, THEN WHAT'S, Um, FIVE THOUSAND, TWO--
ALL RIGHT THEN, PRINCESS. LET'S SAY YOU'RE NOW QUEEN. ENEMY FORCES ARE ATTACKING WESTSIDE ISLAND, FOUR HUNDRED IN THE SOUTHERN PORTS AND FOUR HUNDRED IN THE EASTERN PORTS. YOU HAVE FIVE HUNDRED SOLDIERS AT YOUR COMMAND.
WHAT DO YOU DO?
WELL, NICOLE? HOW DO I SPLIT OUR FORCES?
DATA NOT SUFFICIENT.
C'MON...
DIVISION OF FORCES NOT RECOMMENDED.
SUGGESTED TACTIC: FOCUS ALL FORCES ON ONE PORT AND ABANDON THE OTHER. THIS GUARANTEES ONE PORT SUCCESSFULLY RECLAIMED.

NO! I WANT TO SAVE EVERYONE!
FORCES ARE INSUFFICIENT.
THEN GIVE ME A DIFFERENT SOLUTION.
INSUFFICIENT DATA.
WELL, QUEEN SALLY?
WHAT IS YOUR DECISION?
I-I...
I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
I'M SORRY, ROSIE. YOU'RE RIGHT. I WANT TO BE A QUEEN WHO'S THERE FOR HER PEOPLE... SO... I'LL HAVE TO BE MORE SELF-RELIANT.
...THOUGH MAYBE NICOLE CAN BE MY ROYAL ADVISOR?
I THINK THAT POSITION IS TYPICALLY RESERVED FOR LIVING BEINGS.
SORRY TO HAVE PUT YOU ON THE SPOT LIKE THAT, PRINCESS.
YOU'RE MUCH TOO YOUNG TO HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT TACTICAL WARFARE...

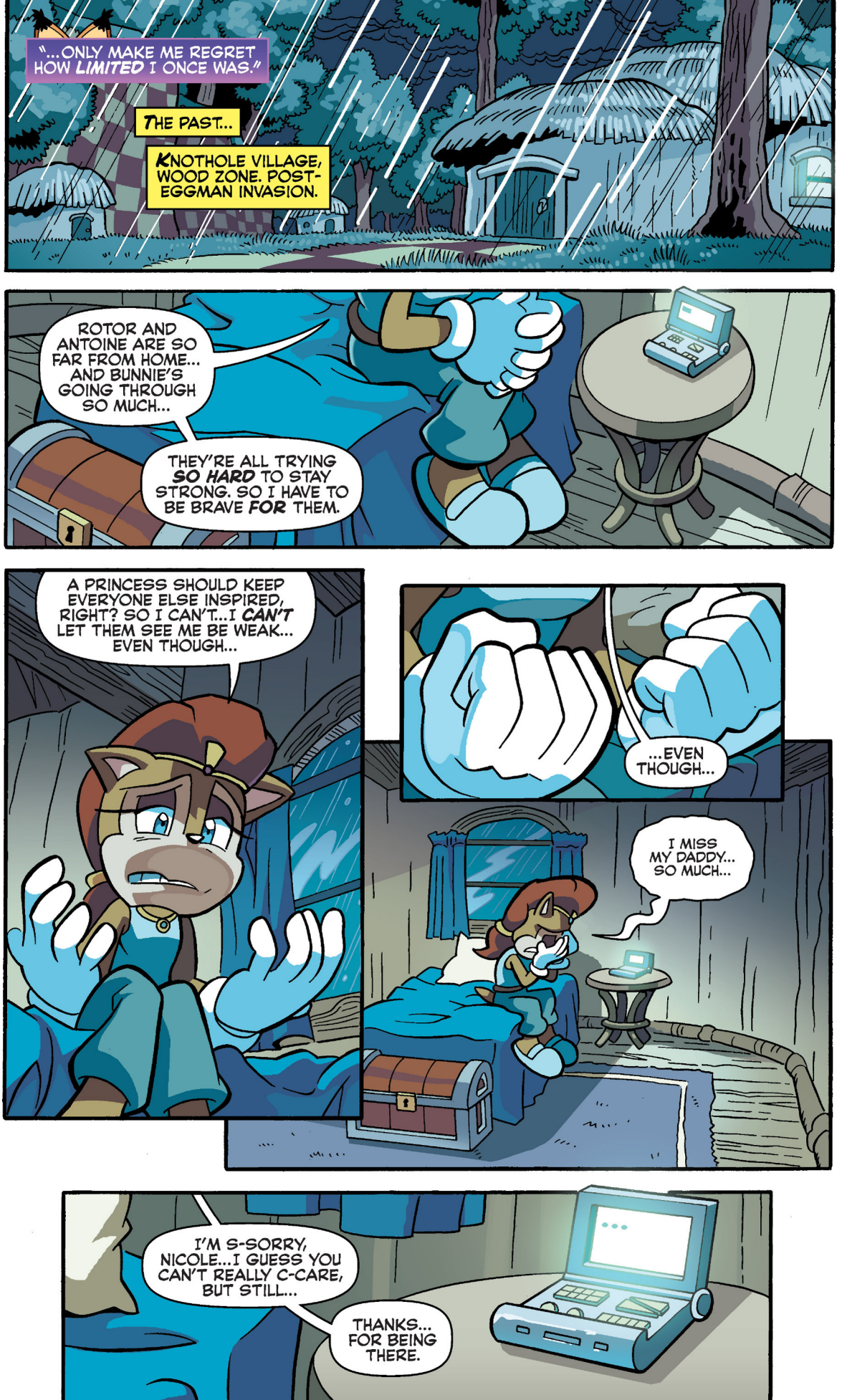
DR. ELLIDY'S LAB...
READY, NICOLE?
LOCKING DOWN MY HANDHELD...MOVING TO THE MAIN SYSTEM NOW. IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE STILL IN CONTACT WITH THE DIGITAL WORLD.
DR. ELLIDY'S MAIN SYSTEM...
THE FIREWALL SEEMS INTACT, THOUGH THAT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN SOMETHING HASN'T BYPASSED IT UNDETECTED.
RETIRED OR NOT, I DIDN'T THINK MY SKILLS WERE THAT RUSTY...
THE BADNIKS ALL APPEAR ONLINE BUT NOT...NECESSARILY RESPONSIVE...Hmm...I BELIEVE THIS QUALIFIES AS "FRUSTRATING."
...WHAT COULD POSSSIBLY...?

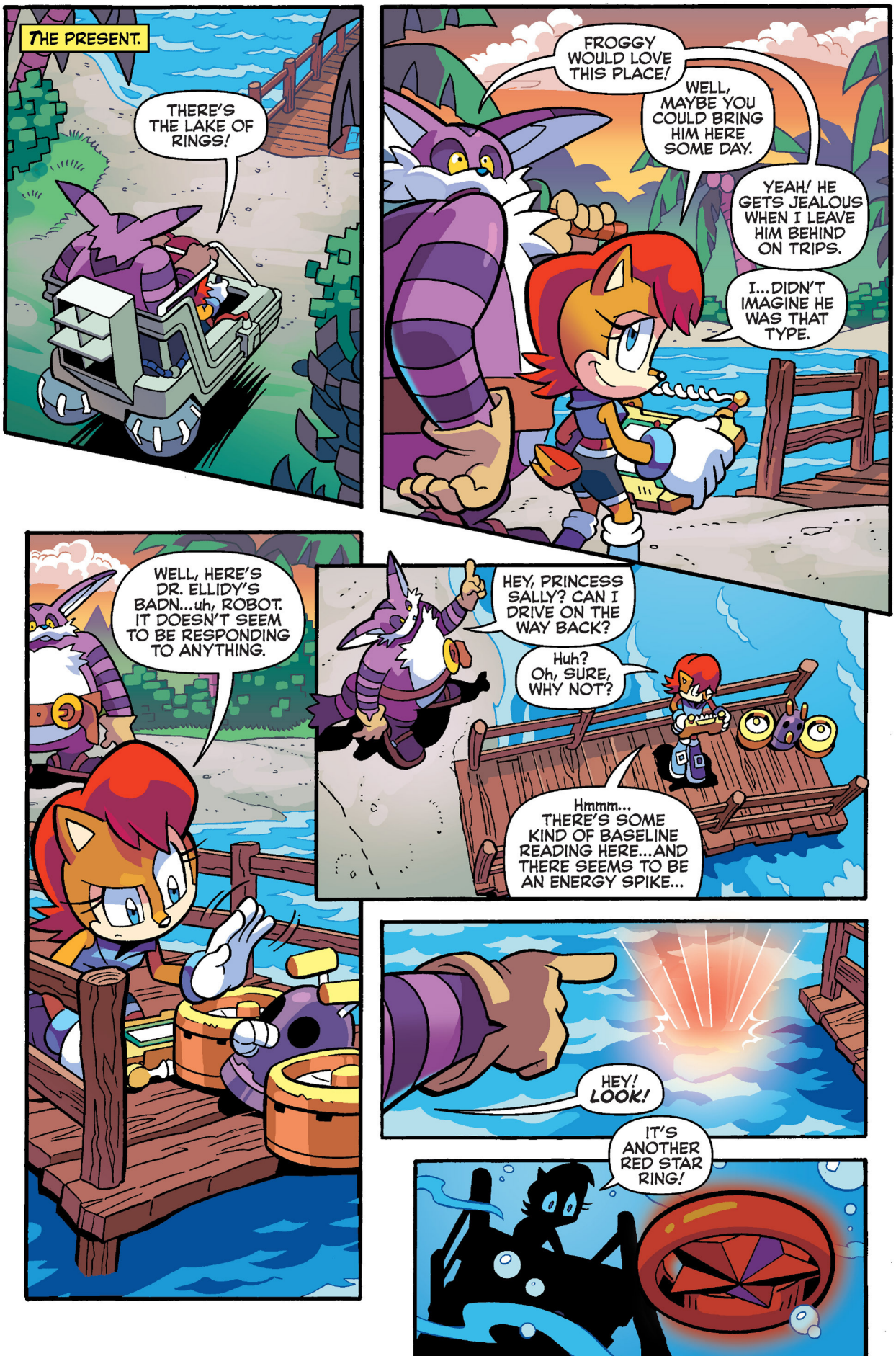

NICOLE?
YES, I'M HERE.
IS IT LOOKING LIKE A VIRUS, OR...?
I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT... I'M NOT SURE. I THINK SOMETHING *IS* HERE. SOMETHING ELUSIVE.
TAILS. I SUGGEST WE PARTITION THE SYSTEM IN ORDER TO LIMIT ITS MOVEMENT.
I'M GOING TO SEARCH FOR IT DIRECTLY.
ALL RIGHT...


...JUST BE CAREFUL.
THE WAY YOU INTERACT... NICOLE'S GROWTH IS TRULY... IMPRESSIVE.
NO KIDDING! I DON'T KNOW IF EVEN I COULD PULL OFF PROGRAMMING LIKE THAT! LIKE, I BUILT THIS ROBOT, T-PUP, AND SOMETIMES... WELL THERE WAS THIS ONE INCIDENT, WHILE WE WERE PLAYING FETCH...
Uh...ACTUALLY, IT'S SORT OF EMBARRASSING...
Ah, WELL... TRUTH BE TOLD... NICOLE'S CREATION WAS THE RESULT OF...UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES... I DON'T THINK...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK ABOUT ME AS IF I'M NOT HERE.
O-OF COURSE NOT! MY APOLOGIES.
NICOLE, TELL ME... DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU WERE FIRST ACTIVATED?
TECHNICALLY, I REMEMBER EVERYTHING. BUT HOW I REMEMBER IT IS...DIFFERENT. I DON'T...
I CAN'T VIEW THOSE EVENTS AS I SEE THINGS NOW.

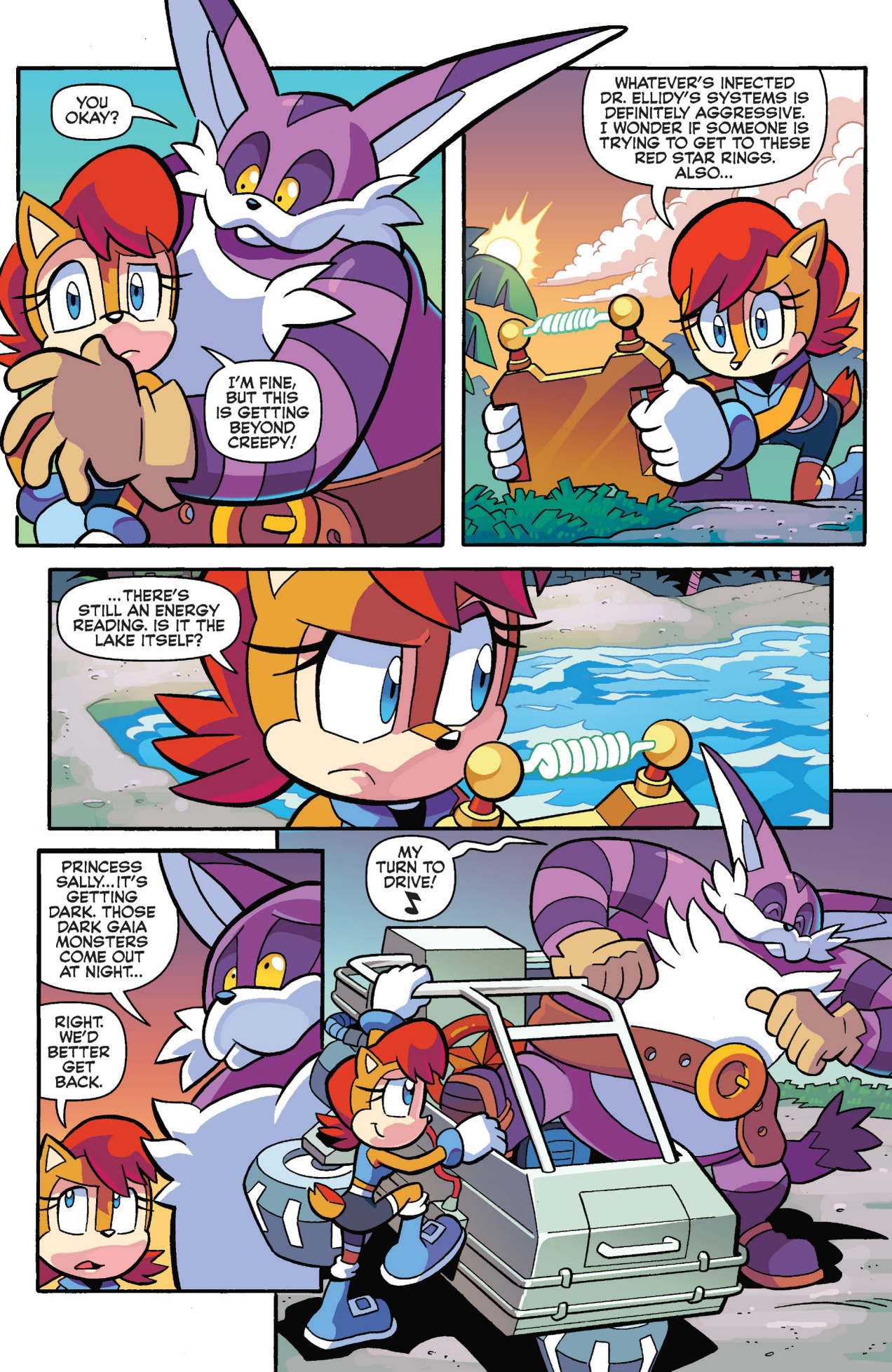
THE PAST...
MOBOTROPOLIS, WESTSIDE ISLAND
COME ON... PLEASE... ANYTHING...
UNIT ONLINE. GREETINGS, DR. ELLIDY.
WHO...DID IT WORK?
...ARE YOU...
THIS UNIT HAS NO SET DESIGNATION.
NO...OF COURSE NOT...

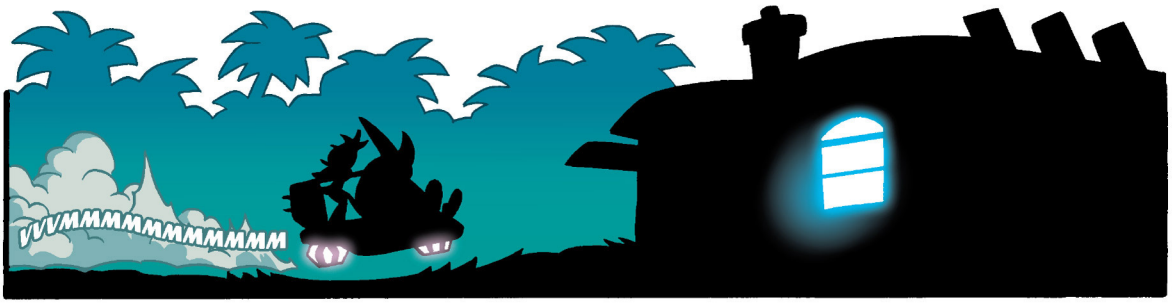
Uh, HELLO? DR. ELLIDY? ARE YOU FEELING WORN OUT FROM EARLIER?
Ah, YES, A LITTLE. SORRY, LET'S KEEP WORKING.
SO...NICOLE. WAS THERE SOME KIND OF...CATALYST, OR EVENT THAT CHANGED YOUR OUTLOOK?
I DON'T BELIEVE SO...
BUT AS I SAID, MY "CONNECTION" TO THOSE MEMORIES IS NOT...CONSISTENT.
SYSTEM PARTITIONED
MY ENTIRE PERSPECTIVE EXISTED IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT.
MANY OF THE EVENTS THAT I CAN RECOGNIZE...


"...ONLY MAKE ME REGRET HOW LIMITED I ONCE WAS."
THE PAST...
KNOTHOLE VILLAGE, WOOD ZONE. POST-EGGMAN INVASION.
ROTOR AND ANTOINE ARE SO FAR FROM HOME... AND BUNNIE'S GOING THROUGH SO MUCH...
THEY'RE ALL TRYING SO HARD TO STAY STRONG. SO I HAVE TO BE BRAVE FOR THEM.
A PRINCESS SHOULD KEEP EVERYONE ELSE INSPIRED, RIGHT? SO I CAN'T...I CAN'T LET THEM SEE ME BE WEAK... EVEN THOUGH...
...EVEN THOUGH...
I MISS MY DADDY... SO MUCH...
I'M S-SORRY, NICOLE...I GUESS YOU CAN'T REALLY C-CARE, BUT STILL...
THANKS... FOR BEING THERE.


THE PRESENT.
THERE'S THE LAKE OF RINGS!
FROGGY WOULD LOVE THIS PLACE!
WELL, MAYBE YOU COULD BRING HIM HERE SOME DAY.
YEAH! HE GETS JEALOUS WHEN I LEAVE HIM BEHIND ON TRIPS.
I...DIDN'T IMAGINE HE WAS THAT TYPE.
WELL, HERE'S DR. ELLIDY'S BADN...uh, ROBOT. IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE RESPONDING TO ANYTHING.
HEY, PRINCESS SALLY? CAN I DRIVE ON THE WAY BACK?
Huh? Oh, SURE, WHY NOT?
Hmmm... THERE'S SOME KIND OF BASELINE READING HERE...AND THERE SEEMS TO BE AN ENERGY SPIKE...
HEY! LOOK!
IT'S ANOTHER RED STAR RING!

SPLASH
WOW, WAS THAT PERFECT TIMING OR WHAT? LET'S GET THIS NEW RING BACK TO--
WHOOSH
HEY!
BZZT
THUNK


YOU OKAY?
I'M FINE, BUT THIS IS GETTING BEYOND CREEPY!
WHATEVER'S INFECTED DR. ELLIDY'S SYSTEMS IS DEFINITELY AGGRESSIVE. I WONDER IF SOMEONE IS TRYING TO GET TO THESE RED STAR RINGS. ALSO...
...THERE'S STILL AN ENERGY READING. IS IT THE LAKE ITSELF?
PRINCESS SALLY...IT'S GETTING DARK. THOSE DARK GAIA MONSTERS COME OUT AT NIGHT...
RIGHT. WE'D BETTER GET BACK.
MY TURN TO DRIVE!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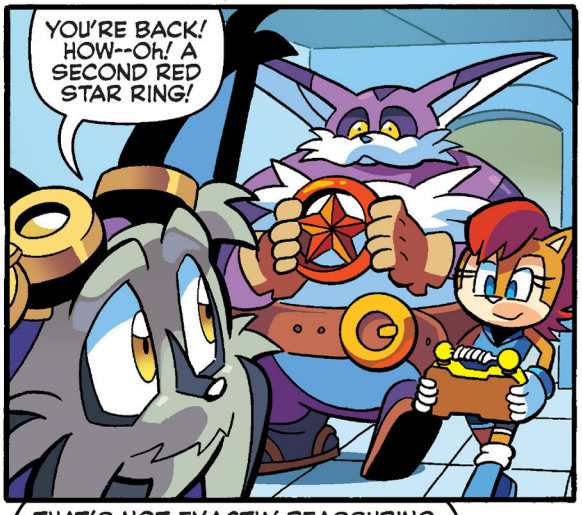
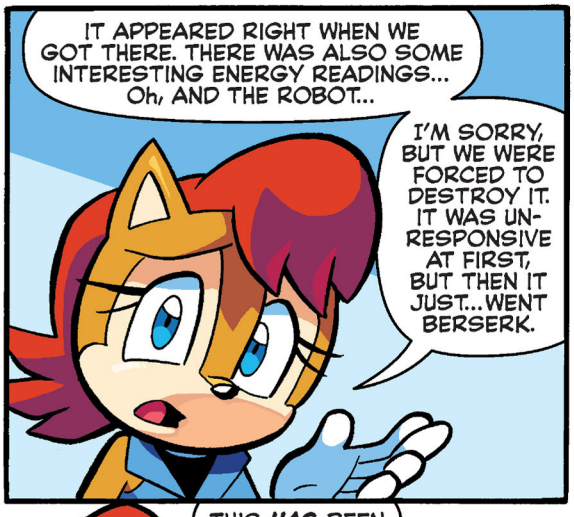
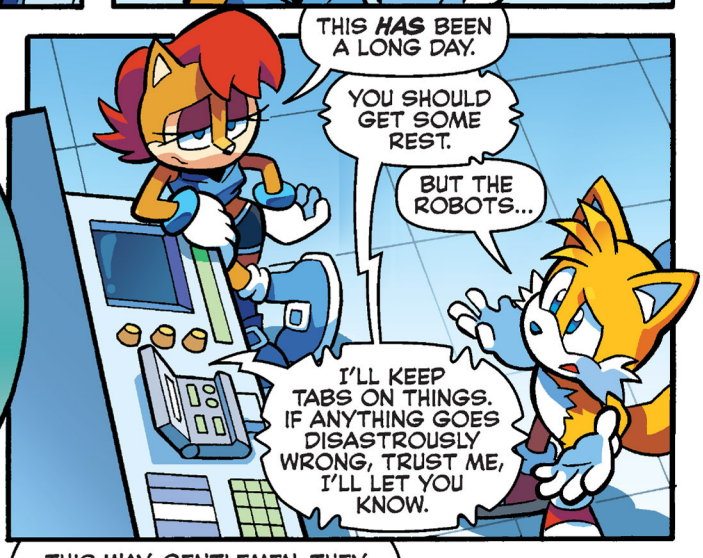
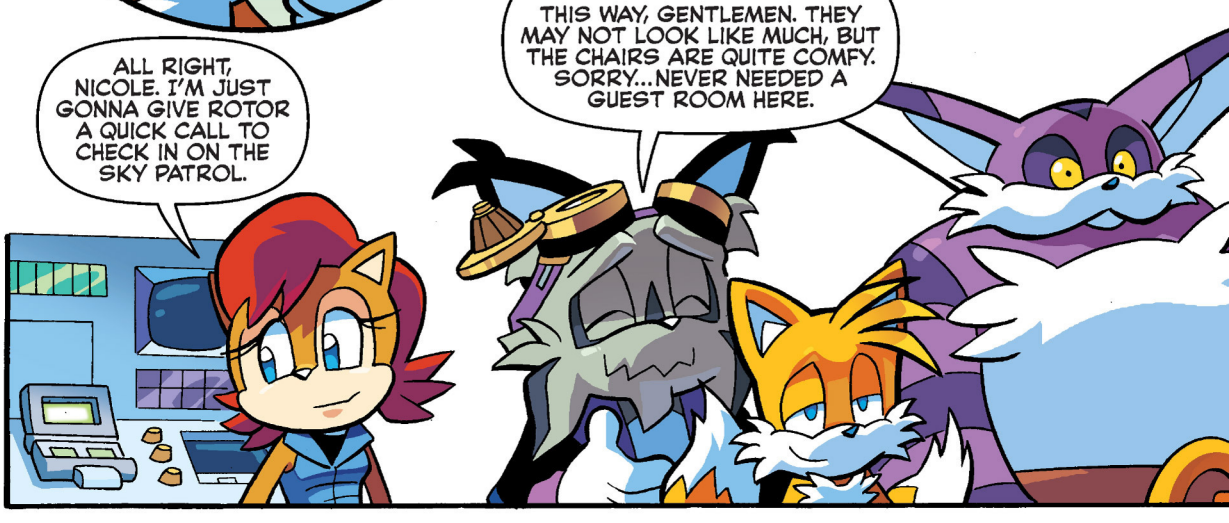
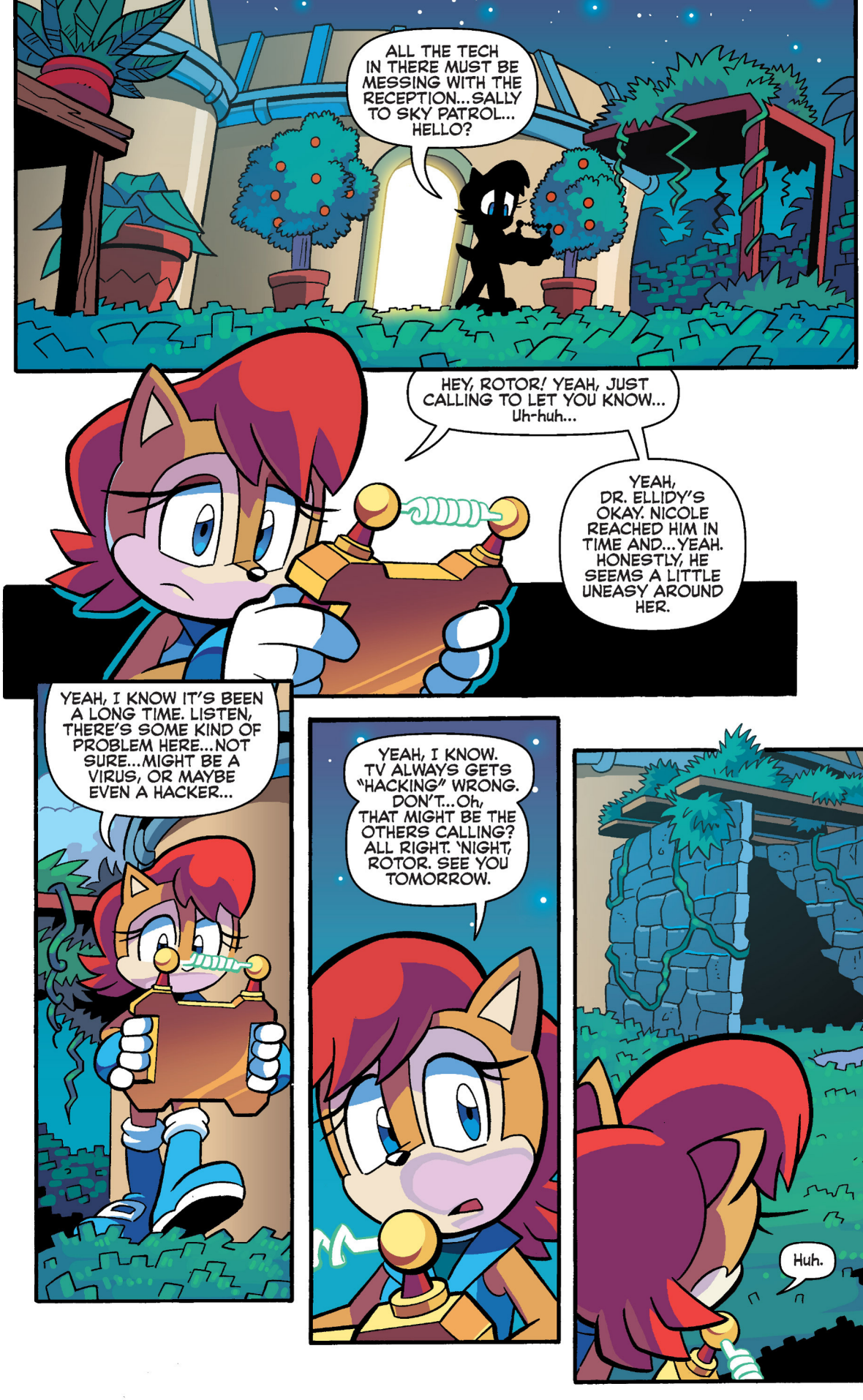

YOU'RE BACK! HOW--Oh! A SECOND RED STAR RING!


IT APPEARED RIGHT WHEN WE GOT THERE. THERE WAS ALSO SOME INTERESTING ENERGY READINGS... Oh, AND THE ROBOT...
I'M SORRY, BUT WE WERE FORCED TO DESTROY IT. IT WAS UN-RESPONSIVE AT FIRST, BUT THEN IT JUST...WENT BERSERK.

THAT'S NOT EXACTLY REASSURING. I DUNNO IF WE'RE EVEN ALL THAT MUCH CLOSER TO PINPOINTING THE PROBLEM HERE AND...
=YAAAWWN=


THIS HAS BEEN A LONG DAY.
YOU SHOULD GET SOME REST.
BUT THE ROBOTS...
I'LL KEEP TABS ON THINGS. IF ANYTHING GOES DISASTROUSLY WRONG, TRUST ME, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.


ALL RIGHT, NICOLE. I'M JUST GONNA GIVE ROTOR A QUICK CALL TO CHECK IN ON THE SKY PATROL.
THIS WAY, GENTLEMEN. THEY MAY NOT LOOK LIKE MUCH, BUT THE CHAIRS ARE QUITE COMFY. SORRY...NEVER NEEDED A GUEST ROOM HERE.


ALL THE TECH IN THERE MUST BE MESSING WITH THE RECEPTION...SALLY TO SKY PATROL... HELLO?
HEY, ROTOR! YEAH, JUST CALLING TO LET YOU KNOW... Uh-huh...
YEAH, DR. ELLIDY'S OKAY. NICOLE REACHED HIM IN TIME AND...YEAH. HONESTLY, HE SEEMS A LITTLE UNEASY AROUND HER.
YEAH, I KNOW IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME. LISTEN, THERE'S SOME KIND OF PROBLEM HERE...NOT SURE...MIGHT BE A VIRUS, OR MAYBE EVEN A HACKER...
YEAH, I KNOW. TV ALWAYS GETS "HACKING" WRONG. DON'T...Oh, THAT MIGHT BE THE OTHERS CALLING? ALL RIGHT. 'NIGHT, ROTOR. SEE YOU TOMORROW.
Huh.

WHAT THE...
I'M DISAP-POINTED IN YOU, PRINCESS.
I EXPECTED YOUR FATHER TO TEACH YOU BETTER THAN TO SNOOP AROUND!
LOOKS LIKE SALLY STUMBLED ACROSS SOMETHING SHE WASN'T MEANT TO SEE!
WILL THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS SURVIVE THE NIGHT?!
FIND OUT IN: SPARK OF LIFE PART THREE
AND DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT SONIC THE HEDGEHOG EACH MONTH, the SONIC SUPER SPECIALS & SONIC SUPER DIGESTS EACH QUARTER, & THE GRAPHIC NOVEL LIBRARY ANY TIME! PLUS THE ALL-NEW SERIES SONIC BOOM—ON SALE NOW!!

NEXT ISSUE: SONIC UNIVERSE 73

SPARK OF LIFE

PART 3 OF 4